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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 005098

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2021

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [USUN](#) [LE](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY'S GOVERNMENT PREPARED FOR PARLIAMENTARY  
VOTE TODAY ON LEBANON DEPLOYMENT

REF: A. ANKARA 5020

[1](#)B. ANKARA 4978

Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b),  
(d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. After a lengthy meeting of party MPs on September 4, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has its ducks in a row for today's parliamentary vote to approve deploying Turkish troops to Lebanon. PM Erdogan was not able to eliminate all dissent, but Embassy contacts report that he persuaded a few more key deputies to his side. FM Gul and opposition party leaders will each speak for 20 minutes at the extraordinary session, scheduled to begin at 3 pm (8 am EDT). The vote will be open, with each vote recorded electronically. Public opposition to a troop deployment continues to run high, with demonstrations by student groups and opposition parties planned. Erdogan's personal commitment, the AKP's substantial parliamentary majority and the open vote procedure make it highly likely the motion to deploy troops will pass. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) PM Erdogan wrapped up a weekend of lobbying AKP deputies with a lengthy meeting with party MPs on September 4 to solidify support for today's parliamentary vote on contributing Turkish troops to UNIFIL. Embassy contacts who attended last night's closed meeting reported good party unity on the motion, although a few AKP deputies continue to oppose a deployment. Erdogan reportedly reiterated that this will be a peacekeeping and humanitarian mission; Turkish troops will not be deployed to disarm combatants and will not be stationed where clashes are likely to occur. He and FM Gul stressed the important regional role Turkey can and must play by contributing troops, particularly since the Lebanese and Israeli governments have both encouraged Turkey to participate. The appeal persuaded a few more key deputies to support the motion, most notably TGNA Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mehmet Dulger. Dulger, who had earlier voiced concern about sending troops, reportedly told the assembled AKP deputies that he now supports a deployment. Media reports predict a maximum of 25 AKP dissenters, out of the party's 355 seats.

[1](#)3. (C) The extraordinary session, which is set for 3pm (8am EDT), will start with 20-minute speeches by FM Gul and opposition leaders from the Republican People's Party (CHP)

and the Motherland Party (ANAVATAN). Two or three other deputies may also address the assembly. Votes will be tallied electronically. While the opposition is united against the motion, they do not have the numbers to offset the AKP's substantial parliamentary majority.

¶4. (C) Public opposition to a troop deployment continues to run high. Demonstrations scheduled by NGOs, student groups and the opposition CHP at various locations in Ankara are not expected to attract large turnouts as universities are still in summer recess and reportedly no permits have been issued.

¶5. (C) Comment. Erdogan's calculated strategy to win over reluctant AKP deputies has shored up party unity on a publicly unpopular issue. His personal outreach and assurances aimed at addressing MPs' concerns will ensure a solid majority vote in favor of deploying troops at today's parliamentary session. End comment.

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